# THE MASLAK (*WAY/IDEOLOGY)* OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND

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The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is with regard to Deeni direction and methodology, an embodiment of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat. It is also an integral and original part of the Ahle Sunnat (wherefrom gradually many sects are being slowly separated). This trend was begun in India and gained its force and momentum by Hadhrat Imaam Shah Waliullaah Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaih). The Ulama of Deoband are the interpreters and link in the chain for the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat in India. Through the means of *Ta`leem* (education) and *Tarbiat* (nurturing), they had spread this message and way across the east and west.

The Ulama of Deoband had remained steadfast upon the principles of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat from the beginning to the end. In fact, they had preserved this through the generations. Actually, they are not any different from the Ahle Sunnat, in fact, their lineage and chain reaches in the same direction. Hence, insofar as their methods and ideologies are concerned, they are not any new sect, nor are they a sect which has been initiated afterwards. In reality, they (Ulama of Deoband) are (from) the actual Ahle Sunnat which has come down and transmitted from before. The time factor and excesses (*Ifraat Tafreet)* had given rise to many sects within the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat. Not only has every new sect had laid claim to being the original, they had in fact, drawn parallels to the original group and condemned the original to falsehood and labelled themselves as the original. They had spared no effort in this direction. Since this became the pastime of every breakaway sect, the general masses of the original Ahle Sunnat became doubtful and were left in a quandary. Many questions were raised. Nevertheless, the original will always remain the original. When actual differentiation takes place then the original will shine forth. Therefore it is imperative that before we outline the way and methods, it is appropriate that we make the differentiation, so that the fake may be separated from the original.

**WHO IS THE ORIGINAL AHLE SUNNAT WAL JAMAAT?**

In order to recognise the original Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, and to understand the concise and balanced way of the Ulama of Deoband, wherein there are no excesses (*Ifraat Tafreet)*, no exaggerations, in fact a perfect embodiment of a balanced way, we need to contemplate over the root and source of the title. In this way the foundations and standard of comparison will become apparent. The title of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat comprises two parts – *"As Sunnat"* and *"Al Jamaat"*. The combination of both these translates into the way of the Ulama of Deoband. *"As Sunnat"* denotes principles, rules and regulations and *"Al Jamaat"* denotes a body, persons and companions. From this, it is apparent that an ideology (a way and method), which has principles and regulations but no body (group of persons) or if there is a body but there are no principles and regulations, then it is meaningless and not worth any consideration. Laws find their recognition and implementation in a body (group of persons) and a body is recognised by their laws. Therefore, an ideology is not regarded as being notable if the one is existent without the other. Just as Allaah Ta`ala had not only given this Ummat the Qur`aan Majeed on its own, He bestowed them

with the being of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), who conveyed the message of the Qur`aan. He relayed the words thereof, taught its meaning and implemented it in his practical example. Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) did not restrict himself to only implementing the laws of the Qur`aan Majeed, he even prepared personalities with these laws, who on their own and in their respective eras taught and implemented the laws of Deen, thereby nurtured and preparing others.

From this Sunnat of Allaah Ta`ala and Sunnat of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) it is apparent that for this Deen and guidance of the Deen the Qur`aan Majeed on its own or personalities on their own are insufficient. In fact, together with the laws, there has to co-exist teachers of these laws, and together with literature there has to be guiders. This is so in order that knowledge not merely exists in book and word form, but it is granted a luminous hue and colour which shines forth and impacts on the hearts of people. Hence, the way of the Ulama of Deoband, who are also known by the other title of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, have brought into practice these two integral assets -- laws and a body -- gleaned from the guidance of Nubuwwat. In fact, the very title of this group demonstrates the subject matter of its contents, and includes these two integral constituents, namely, *"As Sunnat"* and *"Al Jamaat"*.

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SECT DESTINED FOR JANNAT FROM THE 73 SECTS MENTIONED IN THE HADITH

Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) had distinguished the sect of Haqq from the other 72 sects in the Hadith *"Ma Ana Alaihi Wa Ashaabi" (That (way) upon which I and my companions are)* by combining the words *Ma* and *Ana* into the sentence. By his (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) using the word *Ma* is an indication towards *As Sunnat* – that is, the way of the Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) or the laws of the Deen. This is the basis upon which the sect of Haqq is founded. The words *Ana Wa Ashaabi* denotes towards *Al Jamaat*. The Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat has formulated its basis and roots from the words of this Hadith. In fact, Imaam Ahmad and Abu Dawood, when discussing this subject, states this Hadith of *"Ana Wa Ashaabi"* under the caption of *Al Jamaat*. In the Hadith it is mentioned ***"This is the Jamaat"*** when referring to the one sect which will be in Jannat and the successful one as opposed to the other 72 sects destined for the Fire. For this reason, the one portion in the title of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat is actually found in the text of the Hadith. Since the word *"Ma"* in the Hadith refers to a way and path and the way referred to is that of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) and this way is called the Sunnat, so the second part in the title of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat is also, so to say, found in the text of the Hadith. This is one very strong proof that the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat are on the path of Haqq, because Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) had himself formulated the title of this sect. We learn from this, that the sect which is on Haqq is that one which comprises of these two roots and parts. When one contemplates carefully over this, then it will be realised that the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat are an embodiment of the words *Ma* and *Ana* which are found in the Hadith. If for example, this sect was called *Ahle Qur`aan, Ahle Hadith, Ahle Fiqh, Ahle Tasawwuf, Ahle Kalaam or Ahle Usool*, then it would not encompass the word *Ma*, hence it would be an incomplete and incorrect title. Alternatively, if it was called *Ahle Jamaat, Muttabieen-e-Sahaabah, Ashaab-e-Muhadditheen Wa Mujtahiddeen, Ittibaa`-e-Fuqahaa* or *Muhibbeen-e-Ahle Bait*, etc. then undoubtedly, whilst it would comprise the word *Ana* which appears in the Hadith, but it would be void of the

import of the word *Ma*. Also, in this case, it would be construed as being a sect which comprises personality-worship and veneration, which is devoid of any sound laws or principles. Such a title would also be incomplete and incorrect. The title *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat* comprises both the integral parts implied in the Hadith and it manifests the words of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

Since this ideology, path and way are in the actual words of the speech of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), and it is also the import of his intention, then it can safely be averred that this path and way and the tile adopted by the adherents thereof is the desire of Nubuwwat and in it lies the Pleasure of Allaah Ta`ala. Alhamdulillah, this is the path chosen by the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat and it has been made their way of life. Hence, the summary of the way and path of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat is in accordance to the desire of the Hadith of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). The summary thereof would be *'Following the Sunnat via personalities"*. And now to dissect this ideology:

**THE DEFINITION OF THE TITLE 'AHLE SUNNAT WAL JAMAAT'**

The words *As Sunnat* and *Al Jamaat* can best be concisely described in the following way. *As Sunnat* would include the way and manner of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). All the many branches that spring from the way of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) are included in the way of the Ulama of Deoband. *Al Jamaat* would include Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and all those who had benefited from his beneficence, like the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum), Tabieen, Aimmah-e-Mujtahiddeen and Ulama-e-Raasikheen (rahmatullahi alaihim ajmaeen). Each one of them is honoured and respected in accordance to their respective status and ranks. In the same way this ideology (of the Ulama of Deoband) gains its hue and colour from the principles and corollaries of the personalities who are the branches from the tree of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). The result of this is that no branch of the Deen can ever be free of the effects of the Sunnat of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Otherwise it will not be even termed as 'Deen'. There can be no personality in the Deen who does not come under the shadow of the being of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Otherwise he would not be regarded as a person of the 'Deen'. Hence, no group can claim to be following and in conformity with the desire of Nubuwwat unless it has a relationship with every aspect of the lineage of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and it adopts the principles and laws of the Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Every group of personages that is connected with Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) inadvertently lead up to him. It will therefore be seen that all the sectors of the Shariah, be it knowledge or practice, and not only these two, but every proof in the Deen, are all the resultants and effects of Nabi's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) various connections.

For example Nabi's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) connection and relation to Imaan gives rise to the branch of Imaan, which is referred to in the Shariah as *Kalaam*. His connection to the Deen (*Nisbat-e-Islaami)* gives rise to the branch of rulings or practices, which in the Shariah is referred to as *Fiqh*. His *Nisbat-e-Ihsaani* gives rise to the branch for purification of the soul and perfection of character, which in the Shariah is referred to as *Tasawwuf.* His *Nisbat-e-I`laa Kalimatullaah* (connection to raising the Kalimah of Islaam) gives rise to the branch of politics and Jihad, whose general title would be Imaarat (leadership) and Khilaafat. His *Nisbat-e-Istinaadi* gives rise to the branch of transmission of the Deen through Sanad (chain of narrators),

whose Shar`i name is *Fin-e-Riwaayat Wa Istinaad*. His *Nisbat-e-Irtiqaa`i* gives rise to the branch of *Uloom-e-Firaasat Wa Ma`rifat*, whose Shar`i name is *Fin-e-Haqaa`iq Wa Asraar*. His *Nisbat-e-Istiqraa`i* gives rise to the branch of rules and laws of the Shariah, which is termed *Fin-e-Usool* in the Shariah. This refers to both the Usools (principles) of Fiqh, Tafseer and Hadith. His *Nisbat-e-Ijtimaa`i* gives rise to the branch of mutual assistance and excellent morality, whose Shar`i term would be *Hadhaarat Wa Madniyat*.

His *Nisbat-e-Tayseeri* gives rise to the branch of affinity for ease and moderation, whose Shar`i term is *Adl Wa Iqtisaad*. Then, if we look at the Shar`i proofs, whereupon this concise Shariah is based, then we see that Nabi's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) *Nisbat-e-Anbaayi* (Nubuwwat) gave rise to Wahi, which is collectively known as *Al-Qur`aan.* His *Nisbat-e-I`laami Wa Bayaani*, that is his example of speech and actions, which personified the Qur`aan Majeed, whose collective term would be *As Sunnat.* His *Nisbat-e-Alqaa-i* and *Wajdaani* which gave rise to the extraction of Masaa`il, is termed *Ijtihaad* in the Shariah. His *Nisbat-e-Khaatimiyat* which gave rise to the state of perpetual guidance of mankind and their deviation, when not in a group. Its Shar`i term is *Ijma.*

## THE FOUR PROOFS IN THE DEEN AND THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE PATH OF THE AHLE SUNNAT WAL JAMAAT

And in this way, the four proofs in the Shariah were given rise to from Nabi's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) connections. The various Masaa`il in the Shariah find their source from here – (1) Kitaabullaah (Qur`aan Majeed), (2) Sunnat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), (3) Ijma of the Ummat and (4) The Ijtihaad of the Mujtahid.

The object is that all the branches of the Deen and all its proofs, spring forth and begin from Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Their various Shar`i terms and titles were formulated later on, when they were systematically codified and their various laws and regulations were compiled from the teachings of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). But, there actual existence was from before in the being of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). It is for this reason that all these branches of Deen, like Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Hadith, Tafseer, Riwaayaat, Diraayaat, Haqaa`iq, Usool, Hikmat, Kalaam, politics, etc. fall within the scope and definition of Sunnat. The Ulama of Deoband have extracted all these from the various Kitaabs and made it a part of their way and ideology. They have all been made the constituents of their *Maslak* (way). Then, owing to in-depth research into all these various branches of the Deen, which in turn gave rise to the specialities and expertise in these fields, specific levels and stages of personalities were formulated which were entitled with the appropriate labels, like *Mutakallimeen, Fuqahaa, Sufia, Muhadditheen, Mujtahiddeen, Usooliyeen, Urafa, Hukama, Khulafaa,* etc.

Then in each of these various 'arts' there were created Ulama who were experts and perfectionists in their specific field. They threw themselves into full gear in perfecting these particular fields of study. It was as though they and they field of study became one and the same. They became virtual masters in their fields. They were called *Ameerul Mu`mineen* and *Ulool Amr* of their specialities. They were known as *Imaams* and *Mujtahid*. For example, the Imaams of Ijtihaad, Abu Hanifah, Maalik, Shaafi, etc.

The Imaams of Hadith, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, etc. Imaams of Tasawwuf, Junaid, Shibli, Ma`roof, Bayazid, etc. Imaams of Diraayat and Tafaqquh, Abu Yusuf, Muhammad Bin Hasan Muzni, Ibn Rajab, etc. Imaams of Hikmat and Haqaa`iq, Raazi, Ghazaali, Ibn Arabi, etc. Aimmah of Kalaam, Abu Hasan Ash`ari, Abu Mansoor Maaturidi, etc. Aimmah of Usool, Fakhrul Islaam Bazdawi, Allaamah Daboosi, etc.
People such as the above are examples of those who excelled in their particular fields of study and it is through their efforts and medium that these branches of Deen have reached us.

**THE VARIOUS PARTS AND SECTIONS OF THE MASLAK (PATH/WAY) OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND**

Just like the above-mentioned branches, the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband also comprises of various parts and sections. The concentration and attention of the Ulama of Deoband is equally on all the various branches of the Deen. There is excess on any one particular branch. They do not concentrate only on a particular section or branch, nor do they exclude any branch. They do not put all effort and concentration on a particular branch nor do they ignore it. Their interest is equally focussed on each branch. Their respect and honour for all the various personalities who specialised in each branch is also equal and balanced. The connection of all these personalities is realised to be under the shadow of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). It is for this reason that the Ulama of Deoband do not consider the meaning of a Muhaddith to be that person who is disjointed and unrelated to Fiqh or that a Faqeeh is disjointed from Hadith. They do not regard an Usooli to be higher (in rank) nor do they hold a Sufi in contempt or that a Sufi is of a higher or lower rank than a Mutakallim. The reason for this is that (Ulama of Deoband) regard all these specialised personalities to be from the same source – i.e. Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and his Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). Collectively their efforts are a culmination of the Deen teachings. All these various fields of study, Qur`aan Majeed, Hadith, Fiqh, Usool, Tasawwuf, Kalaam, Riwaayat and Diraayat, etc. collectively make up the Deen. Just as the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) were walking lessons of all these various branches, so too did all these personalities follow in their footsteps. It is s different matter that a particular field of study may have preoccupied a particular personality, but in reality each one of them they was an embodiment of all the Deeni teachings. These personalities, although each one may have specialised in a particular branch of Deen, but that did mean that their lives were devoid of the other branches of Deen.

**AN IMPORTANT FOUNDATION OF THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND**

Just as it is necessary and incumbent to follow, accept and grant due consideration to all the various branches of the Deen so too is it necessary to grant due respect and honour to the various personalities who specialised in them. *Muhabbat* (love) and respect for them is one of the main foundations and fundamentals of the Ulama of Deoband, because this path of comprehensiveness was found in the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). They had made this comprehensiveness the basis of their following Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). At one and the same time they combined all the Sunnans of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and every branch of the Deen together with honour and respect for the being who was connected to all of it. This

very same path of comprehensiveness was adopted by the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat. This comprehensiveness was apparent in their practice and title. This comprehensive mode of theirs was transmitted through the ages. This method reached upto Shah Waliullaah (rahmatullahi alaih), and from him it culminated in the formation of the Daarul Uloom of Deoband, which was in turn transmitted to the Ulama of Deoband. This quality of comprehensiveness is now their identifying trait.

**THE DISPOSITION OF THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND**

The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is abiding by the principles. It is not idolising of personalities neither is it to rely solely on Deeni upbringing and literature. Neither is it dependant solely on personalities nor solely on research. It is neither dependant solely on self-opinionated ideologies nor solely on the statements of pious personalities. In fact, the disposition of the Ulama of Deoband comprises of the laws and regulations of Deen based on sound principles together with the beings and personalities connected to it and with concise authentic and reliable literature. It is not permissible to overlook any one of these. A distinguishing factor and trait of this path is comprehensiveness, caution and moderation which abides to and considers every branch and aspect of the Deen. On the other hand, it exercises honour and sanctity for all personalities connected with the Deen, from the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) to the Aimmah, Auliyaa, Sulahaa, Ulama, Mashaaikh and Hukama. It is free from excesses on all fronts.

Hence, the principles, laws and knowledge of all these branches is based upon two things – *Aqeedah* (beliefs) and *Amal* (practice). This is the reason the Shariah has been revealed and it is the culmination of its branches.

**TAUHEED (*BELIEF IN THE ONENESS OF ALLAAH TA`ALA*) IS THE FOUNDATION OF AQAA`ID**

The base and foundation of all Aqeedah (beliefs) is *Tauheed*, which was the Deen of all the Ambiyaa (alaihis salaam). The base and foundation of all actions is *Ittiba-e-Sunnat* (following the Sunnat – perfect example of Nabi - sallallahu alaihi wasallam). All remaining actions which are transmitted via a reliable chain of narrators, whether it be from the former or latter generations, is either from the fundamentals of the Sunnan-e-Nabawi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) or from its effects and resultants. Hence, the actual and original stressed upon thing of this Maslak is Tauheed of Allaah Ta`ala, which would exclude all types of polytheism and partnership to Allaah Ta`ala.

**A POINT OF MODERATION IN THE AQEEDAH OF TAUHEED IS THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND**

Together with honouring the Ahlullaah and respect for the pious personalities to understand this as negation (of Tauheed) has no part in the Maslak. Hence to be absorbed in Tauheed and to audaciously and boldly claim independence of respect of personalities is also not part of the Maslak. This is not perfection of Tauheed. In fact, it is an exaggeration of Tauheed. Similarly, to be excessive in respect for personalities to such an extent that it interferes with Tauheed or it implies shirk, is also not part of the Maslak. This is not respect; it is an exaggeration of respect. Hence, respect should be limited to such an extent that it does not interfere in Tauheed and Tauheed should

be to such a level that the respect for the pious is not affected. This is the point of moderation of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband.

**THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND WITH REGARD TO THE AMBIYAA (alaihimus salaam)**

If we consider the issue of personalities then we will note that the fountainhead and spring of all piety is the sanctified and honourable Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam),whose Muhabbat, respect, belief and following is the bases of Imaan. However, in subservience to the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat the Ulama of Deoband have not allowed any exaggeration or excesses to creep in and they have exercised a point of moderation. Regarding the Ambiyaa-e-Kiraam (alaihimus salaam) there is no exaggeration in the Maslak as the other misguided sects, who make no distinction between Allaah Ta`ala and the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) – *Nauthubillaah.* They consider the Ambiyaa (alaihis salaam) to be a slighting of Divine Spirit and that they are merely screens (of Divinity). It is as though the Real Deity is in the heavens and they are incarnates. Or, that they are a species other than humankind. Or, that they are the effects of the treasures of Allaah Ta`ala – *Nauthubillaah*.

Neither is their Maslak like the disrespectful material-worshippers, who regard them (Ambiyaa-alaihimus salaam) as mere postman or message-conveyers whose job is to convey the message of Allaah Ta`ala. That's all! *Nauthubillaah!* And their function and status is nothing more than that. Just like a messenger warrants respect so to do they respect the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam)- i.e. no more than a normal human being. So they do not deem it necessary to harbour any respect, reverence or Muhabbat (to the Ambiyaa -alaihimus salaam).
It is apparent that there are excesses here which stem from pure ignorance. Deen and Math-hab are branches of knowledge-not ignorance. This exaggeration is a branch of oppression not justice. The basis of Math-hab is founded on moderation not excesses and exaggeration.

The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband regarding the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) falls between these two ideologies and rests upon moderation. These sanctified personalities who are the custodians of the Divine Message have relayed and conveyed their responsibility with caution. They are the highest form of the species of humankind. They were the exalted teaches and tutors of the Divine Message to mankind. They were also examples of perfect human character and personality. For this reason they are worthy of all honour, respect and admiration. Together with this they are also human beings. They are not a different species. Just as disrespect and dishonour of them is kufr, so too respect for them to the level of shirk is also kufr - of a higher degree.

**THE AQEEDAH OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND WITH REGARD TO NABI (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)**

The final and most honoured individual and personality (amongst mankind) of this revered sect is the being of Muhammed Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), whose status and rank far exceeds and surpasses any other creation. For this reason the level of veneration and adoration for him far extends beyond that of others. However the Ulama of Deoband also exercise moderation with regard to Nabi

(sallallahu alaihi wasallam), which is also found in his (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) teachings. Therefore the Ulama of Deoband profess in all sincerity of heart that Hadhrat Muhammed Mustafa (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is the best of all creation. He is the best of all man and prophets. But together with this, sight should not be lost over the fact the he his from amongst the humankind. Exaggeration in belief and Muhabbat should not result in the audacity of negation of his being a human neither of his being an incarnate of divinity. Nabi's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) being is the culmination of all the excellences of all the other Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). Notwithstanding all this, Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) does not supersede the level of servitude, to reach the stage of divinity.

Whilst we praise and venerate Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and we regard it as being a form of Ibaadat, it is not permissible to exaggerate in this to the level of the Christians, who have transformed the servant into a deity. Even though the Ummat regards the Green Dome to be a source wherefrom Imaan permeates, yet we do not regard Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to be *haazir-o-naazir* (omnipresent), which is a Divine speciality.

In summary, the internal and external perfections of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) by far supersede and surpass the qualities of all other creations. He is beyond compare and example, but his perfections as compared to Divine Perfections are like that of the creation compared to the Creator. The Being and Attributes of the Creator are incomparable and unique whilst that of the creation is limited. The one is everlasting and total whilst the other is temporary and limited. The one is inherent whilst the other is bestowed. Thus the consideration of the limitation is the point of moderation, which is the basis and foundation of this Maslak.

**THE SAHAABAH-E-KIRAAM (radhiallahu anhum).**

After Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) the most sanctified group in this Ummat are those who were taught and nurtured by him. Those who achieved success through his presence, who in the Shariah are known as the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). If there is any group (of this Ummat) that Allaah Ta`ala and Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) had sanctified, then it would only be the group of Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). Besides them there is no other group that has been sanctified. This entire group was hailed as guided and guides, pleased (with Allaah Ta`ala and His Rasool) and with whom Allaah Ta`ala is pleased, attained cleansed hearts, purified souls, always obedient, virtuous, truthful and promised with Jannat. Their acceptance and fame is not restricted to any specific era or time. Their mention was made in the previous Divine Scriptures as well, and this is mentioned in the Qur`aan Majeed. So, their reputation and recognition will remain until the Day of Qiyaamah. They will be made mention of on the tongues, in the hearts, every time Tilaawat of Qur`aan Majeed is made, during the five daily Salaat, in lectures and discourses, in the Musaajid, in places of worship, in Madrasahs, Khaanqahs, in isolation, in groups -- in short, wherever the Qur`aan Majeed is recited, the name and praises of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) will be echoed and sounded. In so far as being praised and sanctified, they are without any equal in this Ummat. After the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) are the most sanctified group amongst mankind. However, the Ulama of Deoband have not let moderation with respect to the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) slip from their hands. Exaggeration and excesses do

not have a play in the belief of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband with regard to the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum).

They do not place the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) upon the pedestal of differentiation and distinction where they claim *Muhabbat* for one and, *Nauthubillah*, hatred for another. Where the tongue is moist in the praises of one Sahaabi and, *Nauthubillah,* curses for another. Neither are all of them sworn at and reviled or some placed on a higher stage than the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). None of them are regarded as being sinless, where they are granted the status of being Divine incarnates.

According to the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband, all these personalities are worthy of respect and honour. However, they are neither prophets nor deities. They are human and bound by the limitations of normal mortals. Nevertheless, they are honoured more than others would be, due to their rank. All the Auliyaa of the world will never reach the rank of even the lowest ranking Sahaabi. This is the moderation that is employed by the Ulama of Deoband with regard to the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum). According to them (Ulama of Deoband) all the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) are equal in so far as their honour of being in the company of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), therefore, they are also equally respected and honoured. Nevertheless, they are also (amongst themselves) subject to levels of importance and rankings. However, since this difference (in rank amongst themselves) does not affect their companionship with Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), hence, there is no difference in so far as the *Muhabbat* and belief in them as being the companions of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is concerned.

The principle of this Maslak is ***"All the Sahaabah are just"***. The Ulama of Deoband lie precisely within the ambit of the beliefs of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat.

With regard to the general respect and honour for the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum), the Ulama of Deoband regard all of them, without any exception, as beacons of guidance for the Ummat and that the success of the entire Ummat, after them, is limited to their knowledge and practice. However, they are not taken as makers of the Shariah, in that the criterion of the Haqq lies with them, that whatever they decide to be Halaal will be so and whatever they decide to be Haraam will be so. Otherwise, there would not remain any difference between prophethood and companionship. They were, after all, followers of the Nabi and his servants, who conveyed the Message brought by the Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to the rest of the Ummat. Yes, although it is the belief of this Maslak that the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) were not the makers of the Shariah, but they were strict adherents to the Shariah. The Shariah was their armour, and they lost themselves in it to the level of perfection. The Ulama of Deoband do not involve themselves in the sin of regarding the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) as being, *Nauthubillah,* treacherous, negligent, be of ill-intent or desirous of name and fame in so far as the Shariah is concerned. The Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) are the first narrators of the Deeni narrations, they are the first tutors to the Ummat and they are the first (of the Ummat) to have properly understood the teachings of the Deen. They were the first (in the Ummat) to recognize Haqq from Baatil. That group which harbours sincere *Muhabbat*, respect and honour for them, without any exceptions, is counted as the group on Haqq. If there exists even the slightest doubt with regard to respect, *Muhabbat*, and honour for them or evil

thoughts, then such persons are not included in the successful group. Therefore, one of the first distinctions of Haqq and Baatil is *Muhabbat*, honour and respect for the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). This is a sign of Taqwa and piety. So the group that regard all the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum), without any exceptions, as being just and pious, will be, according to the Mubarak words of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), the sect which is on Haqq. This is, Alhamdulillah, the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat. As for those who bad-mouth the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) and degrade (any one of) them is separate and divorced from the sect of Haqq.

Had any one of them (Sahaabah -radhiallahu anhum), *Nauthubillah,* digressed even the slightest bit from the straight path, then the Deen would not have reached us in the pure and unadulterated form that it has. If there exists, even the slightest bit of doubt as to the reliability and steadfastness of any of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum), then the entire Ummat would have been subject to reservation and consideration. Therefore, according to the Ulama of Deoband, every one of them (Sahaabah - radhiallahu anhum) are regarded as pious and notable personalities. The entire Ummat is subjected and limited to follow this group (Sahaabah - radhiallahu anhum). Since they are from amongst the best of eras, their status is that of being the deputies of the Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) after his demise. They are the yardstick for the Haqq. Just as a person who refutes and denies Nubuwwat falls out of the pale of Islaam, so too does that person who refutes and rejects the Ijma (consensus) of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum). According to some Ulama the action of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) is also regarded as being a proof in the Shariah. The Ulama of Deoband regard the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) as being the cream of all the Auliyaa, yet they are not deemed to be sinless. However, they are protected by Allaah Ta`ala, which is the epitome of Wilaayat (friendship with Allaah Ta`ala). The final and climax of Taqwa is that the soul reaches gaiety in Imaan, and it is the Sunnat of Allaah Ta`ala that such souls are naturally saved from perpetrating any sin. Notwithstanding the fact that they are not sinless, and that the possibility of sin existed in them, nevertheless, Allaah Ta`ala saved them from sinning. So, although the natural instincts and disposition to sin existed in the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum), this remained limited to a mere natural trait, but since their hearts were purified and imbued with Taqwa, to which the Qur`aan Majeed testifies, if any of them carried out an unworthy act, it did not permeate into their hearts nor affect their Taqwa. Therefore, with such slip-ups, there was no slur or dent on their piety or souls, to which Allaah Ta`ala testified.

## THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND WITH REGARD TO THE CRITICISM OF THE SAHAABAH AND THEIR DISPUTES

The high state of Taqwa and perfection in this sanctified group led to a decrease and weakening in their desire for sin and an increase and fervour for enjoining obedience and good. Imaan and Taqwa beautified their hearts whilst kufr and sin angered their souls. This is the reason why the Ulama of Deoband regard the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) as being the saviours of the Deen, notwithstanding their not being sinless. They are above any criticism. The Ummat should not discuss any of the differences between the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) with a view of criticising any of them over the others. The differences between the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) was a question of who was correct and who was mistaken, it was not a question of who was on Haqq and who on Baatil or between sin and obedience. Everyone is aware that a Mujtahid

who errs is liable for one reward and not censure or rebuke. According to the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband, the issues between the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) is based on their clean intentions and pure souls, hence evil thought regarding any of them is totally impermissible. The same applies to censuring and criticising them. This is a matter to be explained away and not criticise. Hadhrat Umar Ibn Abdil Azeez (rahmatullahi alaih) said: ***"That was blood which Allaah Ta`ala saved our hands from, we should not soil our tongues with it."***

There was no group that came after the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) that were purer and more sanctified than them. The entire group was just, without exception.

There was no era in this blessed Ummat which remained free from pious and virtuous personalities. There was no shortage of Aimmah for guidance, knowledge or perfection. The Ulama of Deoband respects and honours every one of them regardless of his status or rank, because every one of them were the inheritors of the Nubuwwat, and protectors of the Deen. Some were specialists of the *Baatin* (soul) and others of *Zaahir* (outer traits).

The difference between the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) and the latter generations, is that amongst the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) each and every one of this group were worthy of honour, pious and sanctified, whereas, the latter generations consisted of pious an impious persons. The entire group of Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) were just, whereas the latter generations consisted of just and unjust persons.

The Ulama of Deoband do not chastise any of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) due to their differences amongst each other. There is no excesses in either agreeing or disagreeing. Keeping in mind the honour of each one of them, those that were correct in their decisions are lauded whilst those who may have erred are not chastised, rather a suitable explanation and defence is presented for them which suits their honour and rank. The final decision and reckoning is laid at the Court of Allaah Ta`ala. Unnecessary discussions and censuring must not take place.

The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is based upon justice and knowledge and not oppression and ignorance.

Hence, there should be no exaggeration or excesses. You have just now read that the Maslak of the blessed being of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the sanctified Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) was that of justice and moderation. It was not based on excesses and exaggeration.

**TASAWWUF AND SUFIS**

Justice and precaution also applies to the matter regarding the Auliyaa of Allaah Ta`ala. A difference would be regarding that of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) where if there is any excess allowed it would be with regard to *Muhabbat* for them. Besides the kuffaar, there can be absolutely no question of hatred and hostility towards any of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) from any sector of this Ummat.

Similarly, there is no question of hatred or hostility towards any of the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) from the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat. As a matter of fact, there is absolutely no possibility of this ever occurring. Whereas as far as the group of Auliyaa are concerned there may be a possibility of differentiation with regard to the various sectors. One may be wary and cognisant of some Mashaaikh and have no knowledge or connection with other Mashaaikh. It is obvious that in such a case there lies the possibility of an inclination towards some and more *Muhabbat* for them as opposed to the others. There is also the possibility of being unappreciative and

disinclined towards one group as opposed to another. There is also the possibility of excessive inclination and praise for the Mashaaikh of one's choice and disregard and possibly rebuke for others, as is the case in the present era of ignorance.

As far as the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is concerned, it distances itself from excessiveness with regard to the Auliyaa of Allaah Ta`ala. According to them, just as one holds one's own Mashaaikh in high esteem, so too must other Mashaaikh also be honoured and respected. If one discerns any flaw in following the path of the Sunnat in any of the Mashaaikh, but he still remains upon he straight path, then it is the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband that one should not malign and criticise him.

In summary, it is the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband that the Auliyaa and Sufia are like the soul of the Ummat, whereby the Ummat gains spiritual enlightenment and guidance. It is for this reason that the Ulama of Deoband regard *Muhabbat* and honour for them to be incumbent for the preservation of Imaan. However, excessiveness in *Muhabbat* should not lead one to deitise them. Whilst respect and honour for them is necessary it should not be translated into acts of worship, where people prostrate at their graves, circumambulate around their graves, take oaths on their names, make sacrifices on their names, etc. They should never be looked upon as being able to remove one's grieves and sorrows. Their graves should not be made venues of festivities. Singing and dancing should not be a part of their remembrance occasions. To refrain from all such acts in obedience to the Sunnat and desires of Nubuwwat is not a matter of rebuke, in fact, it is praiseworthy. The Mashaaikh are beacons whereby one gains spiritual upliftment and not pawns of satisfying one's naffs, whims and fancies.

## THE MASLAK OF DEOBAND WITH REGARD TO TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS

The customs attached with marriage, grief, etc. are to be carried out in conformity with and limited to the example demonstrated by Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the Salf-e-Saaliheen. The customs attached with grief, *teejah*, *daswah, barsi*, etc. are regarded as Bid`ah. It is for this reason that they are prohibited from with severity. The traditional customs which take place on the occasion of weddings are against the Sunnat, hence they are also discouraged. The difference is that the customs which take place on the occasion of grief, are regarded by the masses as being worthy of reward, hence they are discouraged with vigour, due to their being classified as Bid`ah. The customs which take place at weddings are done for social status, and they are classified as being contrary to the Sunnat.

Bid`ah spoils one's Imaan, in that other things are regarded as being a part of the Deen, whereas they have no truck with the Deen. Perpetration of acts which are contrary to the Sunnat do not necessary spoil the Imaan but they ruin one's actions and satisfy the naffs. In the former case the Deen is being altered and in the latter, whilst the Deen is safe in the heart, nevertheless, it affects the actions.

## THE MASLAK OF DEOBAND WITH REGARD TO ISAAL-E-THAWAAB

They regard Isaal-e-Thawaab as being a virtuous act and a right of the deceased. However they are not claimants of any specific form of carrying out this act, like that of *Niyaaz, Faatihah,* etc.
The Ulama of Deoband accepts the connection with the Ahlullaah and recognise and acknowledge that there is an effect in their intercession and blessings.

**PERFECTION OF CHARACTER, PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL, SHARIAH AND TARIQAT**

The Deobandis accept and acknowledge the institution of perfection of character and purification of the soul through the medium of *bait* (pledge of allegiance) and with companionship with the pious. However, *Tariqah,* which has been passed on from bosom to bosom, is no separate entity from the Deen. The internal and characteristic aspect of the Shariah is termed *Tariqah.* This is the path which is treaded for rectification of the heart. The principles thereof have been proved from the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat. However, those customs, unprincipled ways and fabricated methods, which are alien to the Deen, are not regarded as *Tariqah.* To accept these ways is contrary to the Sunnat and rejected. The pious personalities are regarded as being beacons of blessings and benefit, but they are not made objects of prostration.

**BLESSED HAIR, BLESSED CLOTHING AND BLESSED SHOES**

If any effect of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) like his blessed hair, blessed clothing or even a lace from his blessed shoe is found through a reliable and authentic source, then it would, undoubtedly, be more valuable than the crown of any king and everything else of this world. If it is attained through an unreliable means, then in order to save oneself from disrespect one would abstain from it. Similarly, the effects and blessed remnants of the pious personalities are also worthy of respect, but this respect should never reach the stage of it becoming an object of worship. The Deobandis also do not acknowledge any special customs and rituals associated with such remnants. Such remnants are limited to its blessedness and not to acts of worship.

Nevertheless, the *Muhabbat* and belief in the (sanctity of) Auliyaa of Allaah Ta`ala and the Sufia is, undoubtedly, an integral part of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband. But, to make excesses, exaggeration, customs, etc. regarding them are all customary beliefs which have no place in the Shariah. To believe them to be unrestricted to time and place is also part of the customary beliefs. It may be possible that such occurrences did take place with a sincere *Saheb-e-Haal* at some stage or the other, but this was then later conformed into a firm belief and the masses were made to accept it as part of the norm and likewise it spread in the Ummat. Such beliefs later became a part of the Shariah and people even started accepting them as being an integral part of the Deen. Nevertheless, such things were the result of shortsighted people who claim *Muhabbat*. Such things do not emanate from true and discerning lovers of Allaah Ta`ala and Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Therefore that Maslak which is based on firm discernment will recognise the difference.

## RESPECT FOR THE AULIYAA OF ALLAAH TA`ALA

The crux of the matter is that respect for the Auliyaa of Allaah Ta`ala is an integral part of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband and customary practices are not. Veneration is from the effects of Deen; worship (for the pious) is not. Similarly, the superficialities, statements and actions of the Auliyaa which are made during their states of ecstasy are also considered with moderation by the Ulama of Deoband. They (Deobandis) do not consider any of these statements or actions which are made during states of ecstasy and which are superficially digressed from the Sunnat as being a sign of degradation of the personality. This does not warrant disrespect and rebuke nor does it mean that there is any doubt in the piety of the person. Those who indulge in such degradation and vilification of the pious and regard this as being part of the Shariah are prone to deviation. Such statements and actions (executed during ecstasy) are also not regarded as being part of the Shariah, in that they are encouraged and promoted. In fact, the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is one of moderation and balance. They do not regard the conditions, actions and inspirations of the pious as being a proof in the Shariah, where people are invited towards them and those who do not acknowledge them are condemned to kufr. On the other hand, they do not completely discount such occurrences, thereby disregarding them totally. In fact, the Ulama of Deoband adopt a moderate and balanced view of the conditions and statements of the *Ahle Dil (lovers of Allaah Ta`ala)*, and accept it as a reality. Although such conditions and statements have the façade of being contrary to the Sunnat, but the perpetrator thereof must be a person who in his daily life abides by the Shariah and Sunnah. Such statements/actions are a reflection of their purified conditions and have some validity as long as it is done with genuineness and not fabricated. Therefore such actions/statements, although they outwardly appear to be contrary to the Sunnah, are in reality not so. There are numerous Kitaabs that are written on such conditions, statements and actions of the pious, whose clarifications are made such that they are placed in their proper perspective. They are not merely explained and interpreted away, their reality is expounded.
The excuse for the fact that such occurrences appear outwardly to be contrary to the Sunnah is that it is done whilst the perpetrator is in a condition of ecstasy and elation. Such conditions are special with the person who undergoes it. It is not a general condition which is to be propagated or encouraged. The masses should not follow and accept as binding such conditions, rather they should find a suitable explanation for it and defend the perpetrator.

In short the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband with regard to such things is that such involuntary occurrences and conditions are true, the perpetrator is excused therefrom, there is an explanation for the act/statement, to follow and propagate such conditions is prohibited and the tongue should be saved from rebuke and censure of the perpetrator. It is unacceptable to the Ulama of Deoband that the unclear or vague conditions/statements of some pious personality are forced onto others after a Baatil interpretation is attached to it. It may be possible that such conditions do have a suitable explanation to them but a concerted effort is made to peddle other views. It is apparent that this in neither Deen, nor intelligence nor justice. In fact, it is rebelliousness.

As for those who are fakes and their everyday lives are not in conformity to the Shariah, they are not considered as *Saheb-e-Haal*. Their statements are not considered in any condition. Such person are not included in the discussion above. This discussion refers only to those genuine *Ush-shaaq-e-Ilaahi (lovers of Allaah Ta`ala)*, who have dedicated their lives in gaining His proximity. If any vague or 'meaningless' word emits from their lips, then it has some import and meaning which can be explained. As for the shysters, their every word is meaningless and calculated. It is clear that the useless talk of such persons is not worth any consideration, in fact, it is to be rejected.

## THE STATE OF ECSTASY IS NO LOFTY STAGE

The state of ecstasy is not any lofty and high stage. A lofty and high rank is that one where the Sunnat and Shariah are strictly abided and adhered to. Therefore it remained the trait of the Mashaaikh of Daarul Uloom that they were not prone to states of ecstasy, but they remained steadfast and held on firmly to the Sunnat and Shariah.

## STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE SUNNAT IS THE MASLAK OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND

Obedience to and following the Sunnat is the basis of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband, which is regarded to be upheld at all times. They refute and reject all such things which are contrary to the Sunnat; things which have no basis in the Qur`aan Majeed or the Sunnat; things which are not practiced or acknowledged by the pious and which have no roots and things which have become customary rituals and are being peddled under the guise of the Deen. Staying aloof from all such things and adhering o the Sunnat is the Maslak of the Ulama of the Deoband.

The Ulama of Deoband, keeping to this moderate and balance path, do not pay much attention to the *Majzoob (those lost in Divine meditation)*, or those who are in states of ecstasy. They are left to their respective conditions and kept aloof from. It is apparent that besides this, there is no other safe and content path. The Ulama of Deoband hold in esteem and respect all categories and ranks of personalities, whether they are in the path of *Tariqah* or Shariah. The same respect and honour that is shown to Muhaddith Kabeer Haafiz Ibn Taymiyah (rahmatullahi alaih) is shown to Sheikh Muhyuddin Ibn Arabi (rahmatullahi alaihi). The stage granted to Hadhrat Mujaddid Alfe Thaani (rahmatullahi alaih), who was a personality that often reached states of ecstasy, is also granted to Sheikh Abdul Haqq Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaih). The honour and respect that is due to Imaam A`zam Abu Hanifah, Shaafi, Maalik and Ahmad Ibn Hambal (rahmatullahi alaihim) is also due to Hadhrat Junaid, Shibli, Bayaazid Bustaami and Ma`roof Karghi (rahmatullahi alaihim).

The Maslak of Deoband does not involve itself to pitting one set of personalities against others, thereby degrading and belittling any specific group. Some people, in the name of Sunnat of Nubuwwat, degrade and disparage the deeds and actions of the Auliyaa of Allaah Ta`ala. on the other hand those who ate besot with the Auliyaa tend to overlook the Sunnat. The Ulama of Deoband keep a moderate and balanced view that is between these two extremes. As has already been outlined, the crux of following the Sunnat is to acknowledge and recognise the personalities who are

acquainted therewith. Keeping aside the states of ecstasy and other unique conditions of the Mashaaikh, to disregard and overlook their practices, which are in conformity to the Sunnat or fruits thereof, would only result in one depriving oneself. But it would not be prudent to make rituals out of these actions and propagate them, whilst leaving aside the actual Sunnat of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), which is the object of life. This would then result in excessiveness and exaggeration, wherefrom the Maslak of Deoband distances itself.

As far as the ranks, status and recognition of the Ulama of the Ummat, the Fuqahaa, Muhadditheen, Mutakallimeen, Mufassireen and Usooliyeen are concerned, it is not such an intricate issue which necessitates proof or justification. This much all and sundry are aware of that the survival of any Math-hab is dependant upon the knowledge of that Math-hab. That Math-hab whose knowledge does not remain, it will also cease to be in existence. All the Mathaaib are in reality (based upon) Divine Revelation. Another name for Revelation is knowledge, whose protectors are the Ulama. Their name even bears testimony to this duty and function. They are responsible for protecting the knowledge of Deen from destruction and they protect it from all sorts of Fitnahs. Their duty is not merely limited to any specific time and place. Their rebuttal of the oppositions are recorded which act as a perpetual protection. When any fitnah arose from any front and regarding any aspect of the Deen, the respective group of Ulama who specialised in that field would counteract and defend. The Ulama would protect the Deen from Fitnahs, be they spiritual or external or be they with regard to any branch of the Deen.

Therefore, the stand of the Maslak of Deoband needs no dilation with regard to the respect, veneration and sanctity of all sectors of Ulama, when the subject matter of their chosen path and their foundations comprise of the teachings of these seniors of the Ummat. The knowledge of these personalities is their ritual and teachings in their books. This is not only restricted to the Daarul Uloom of Deoband, it is spread out amongst all the Madrasahs and Maktabs (primary centres of learning) which are connected to Deoband. Kitaabs like Bukhari, Muslim, Jalaalain, Baidaawi, Hidaaya, Wiqaaya, Talweeh, Tadheeh, Nasafee, Hujjatullaah and Hujjatul Islaam are the hallmarks of this institution. These are imbued into the bosoms of the adherents. It would be illogical if the authors of these Kitaabs their teachers and seniors are not honoured and respected. In fact, their veneration and love is imbued in the hearts. If there were no respect and reverence for them, then it would not be possible to benefit from their Kitaabs. There can be no possibility of degrading or bad-mouthing any of them.

If there occurs a little mistake and occasional error on any Mas`alah from any of them, which is normal from any Aalim, since there is a famous saying *"Every Aalim makes a slip-up"*, then the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is also one of moderation and balance. Instead of rebuke and censure, an attitude of respect, precaution and moderation is adopted, and where possible an explanation is offered for it. This is on the condition that the person who committed the error still remains within the precincts of the Shariah. As for differences in opinion, the Kitaabs are replete with examples thereof. If differences in opinion warranted censure, rebuke and disrespect, then none of the seniors in knowledge and venerated authors would be liable for any respect.

In this Maslak of moderation, how can it even be possible for ill-feelings to crop up due to differences in opinion. In fact, the contrary is applicable, if both sides have proper proofs and basis for their arguments, it should increase the mutual respect and honour. Why should this not increase the mutual respect, when the differences with proofs, adds new dimensions to the knowledge of Nubuwwat and it opens up new doors of understanding, which is precisely why differences in the Ummat are referred to as a mercy?
This issue of differences, instead of creating conflict and dispute amongst the Ulama of the Ummat, made way for better understanding. As for those unique and strange views regarding which there is no explanation – such matters are to be left at the Door of Allaah Ta`ala and we should harbour good thoughts. Such things do not form part of the Shariah. It is not permissible to follow them as part of the Shariah, and it would also not be advisable to rebuke and criticise them. Instead of making such unique and vague texts a source of headache, one should try to formulate an appropriate explanation for it and/or attribute its import to the author. At this juncture the statement of Imaam Auzaa`e (rahmatullahi alaih) should be considered: *"Whoever holds on (accepts and implements) the rarities of the Ulama has indeed made kufr."*

**FIQH AND FUQAHAA**

With regard to Fiqh and Fuqahaa, the Ulama of Deoband have also adopted a concise and moderate stance, as they had with the Auliyaa and Ulama. The summary of their principle is that in order to save the naffs from free rein, from having an unrestricted Deen, from remaining aloof, from self-opinion and to safeguard the Deen from adulterations, they have opted to remain constrained to a specific Fiqh with regard to Ijtihaadi Masaa`il and to compulsorily limit themselves to the Math-hab of a specific Imaam-e-Mujtahid.
The Ulama of Deoband and their circle are followers of the Hanafi school of thought. With regard to Taqleed and following of a Math-hab, they have chosen moderation, which is free from excesses. They do not subscribe to being so liberal that they refute and challenge the firm principles of the pious predecessors neither do they formulate their own Ijtihaad and opinions and lay claim to it being absolute. They do not subscribe to the contrary as well, where they regard as a sin to make research on Fiqhi Masaa`il and to find a look for their proofs and corroborations in the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat.

Hence they are undoubtedly adherents and subscribers to the concept of Taqleed and are bound to a specific Fiqh. But in this Taqleed of theirs, they are Muhaqqiq (researchers) and not concrete. Taqleed is compulsory, but together with making *tahqeeq (research)*, none of their followers lay claim to being Mujtahid. Whilst remaining within the confines of a specific Fiqh, they do adopt the policy of opting for a certain ruling regarding an issue depending upon the time, place and occasion. They do not regard the doors of Ijtihaad as being terminated. Hence their Maslak is between blank Taqleed and Ijtihaad-e-Mutlaq (making a unique and separate Ijtihaad). On the one hand, to save themselves from self-opinion and following their desires and fancies, they deem it necessary to adhere to the Qur`aan Majeed, Sunnat and rulings of the pious predecessors. Whilst on the other hand, to prevent shortsightedness and blank following, they adhere to the principles of Iftaa and Fatwas, so as to deduce rulings from their proper and correct source. The crux being that together with being researchers in the Deen, they do not lay claim to making

Ijtihaad-e-Mutlaq, and on the other hand they do not negate Ijtihaad altogether where they are oblivious of sourcing any ruling and reasons for rulings.

By following the Fiqh of one Math-hab does not imply or mean that the Maslak of Deoband is separate from any other Math-hab in so far as Ilm is concerned. There are a few differences in the practices between the various Mathaahib. In all Ijtihaadi Masaa`il they (Deobandis) follow the Hanafi Math-hab, and wherever any Mas`alah is verified and accepted as correct, the knowledge of the other Mathaahib is also studied and their proofs are also taken cognisance of. By accepting as correct the Hanafi Math-hab, moderation is also adopted here in that the claim is not made that the truth only lies with and is limited to Hanafi Fiqh and that the other Mathaahib are Na*uthubillah,* Baatil and contrary to Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat. It merely implies that we are not followers of their Masaa`il. We accept the proofs of the Hanafis Math-hab as being from Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat and we do not aver that their (other Mathaahib) proofs are Baatil. We consider and prefer our math-hab but do not falsify and deny other Math-habs. The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is the preference of one Math-hab and not the propagation of that Math-hab. Propagation comes into play when faced and opposed by Baatil. In such a case, the Haqq is propagated so that people leave the Baatil. One Haqq cannot be pitted against another Haqq. In this case it would be a negation of Haqq and not demonstrating any preference. The difference is that if there exists Masaa`il based on explicit texts (*Nusoos*) of Qur`aan Majeed and /or Sunnat, then this is established as absolute Haqq. Any opposition thereto is regarded as Baatil, which is fiercely opposed and counteracted. In various and miscellaneous Masaa`il, which are established from Ijtihaad or there exists 'contradictory' *Nusoos*, a Mujtahid would make a preference of one proof over another and base his claim thereupon.

Hence, either a Mas`alah is established from Ijtihaad or an Ijtihaadi Mas`alah is given preference. In both cases the Haqq is merely supplemented. This is known as *sawaab (correct)*. The opposite of this is called *Khat`an (error)*. It is also referred to as unpreferred and not Baatil, otherwise a Mujtahid who had erred would not receive any reward. In fact, he would then be classified as a sinner. If any Ijtihaadi Mas`alah is said to be correct (sawaab), then there exists a possibility of error (Khat`a) in it, similarly, if any Mas`alah is regarded as erroneous, then there exists the possibility of correctness in it.
But this much must also be kept in mind that as far as the Mujtahid is concerned there is no consideration of error and correctness (sawaab and khat`a). Whichever direction his research takes him, he will regard that as being correct and with a firm conviction he will practice upon that only. He will not have any misgivings or doubts regarding what he has opted for, that there is a possibility that it is correct or incorrect, resulting in him practicing upon it without being 'neither here nor there'. If there exists such a doubt, then how will the Muqallideen (followers) ever be able to accept this ruling as being binding upon them. This possibility of correctness or error is with regard to Allaah Ta`ala's judging of the issue. Only Allaah Ta`ala Knows precisely whether the Mujtahid, notwithstanding all his efforts and toil, has reached the Divinely desired objective or not. In any Mas`alah wherein Ijtihaad is made, there is only one side which is correct and Haqq in the Sight of Allaah Ta`ala. The uncertainty and doubt lies in whether the Mujtahid has, after all his effort and research, attained the Divinely desired objective or not. But, since this Divine desire is not based upon or limited to a fixed and ordained ruling or principle, which is obvious and clear, so the Mujtahid is

not constrained or inhibited to practice upon it. In fact, he is constrained and bound to make an effort and research to the best of his ability in reaching the Divine desire, the result of which (for him) will undoubtedly be the truth and correct. Hence, to practice upon his findings and result is Waajib for him and his followers.

Therefore, no Mujtahid can be said to be untrue and deviated. Owing to this, one Mas`alah will, on opposite sides, at the same time be referred to as Haqq. This concept of being correct or erroneous will not be interpreted as a difference between a good and a bad, as would be done between Haqq and Baatil. It is obvious and clear that Ijtihaadi Masaa`il are a combination of either one being Haqq (*Wahdat-e-Haqq)* or a few being Haqq (*Ta`addut-e-Haqq)*. However, the knowledge of which one being on Haqq lies solely with Allaah Ta`ala. The possibility of a few being on Haqq is in consideration to the Mujtahid. In exactly the same way, one who is unsure of the direction of the Qiblah, will make *taharri (estimate/assume).* Now, although the direction of the Qiblah is only one and specific, but according to the one making *taharri*, there are various different possibilities. And according to him, whichever one he opts for will be Haqq. So, in this case, *Ta`addud-e-Haqq* and *Wahdat-e-Haqq* are combined. Another example would be that of the differing narrations and witnesses regarding the Night of Qadr. The possibility is of it being on the $27^{th}$ night of Ramadhaan. Owing to the differing views, there exists various possibilities of the true night, although in the Sight of Allaah Ta`ala it is only on a specific night. Here again there is a combination of *Ta`addud-e-Haqq* and *Wahdat-e-Haqq.* The same applies to Ijtihaadi Masaa`il.

Therefore, in these cases where there are various possibilities of Haqq, then in the case of differences of opinion, since both sides are Haqq, there would be no question of falsifying and making Baatil any one side. It is for this reason that since the Ulama of Deoband choose and opt for the Hanafi Math-hab, they do not criticise and regard as Baatil any of the other Mathaahib. All these Ulama (of the different Mathaahib) are all our Ulama and we benefit from their knowledge all the time.

To follow one particular person *(Taqleed-e-Shakhsi)* limits and constrains one's actions and not one's knowledge. In fact, it makes the action a centre on its own and it joins the various knowledges. Thereby creating various differing and new concepts which are added to the circle of knowledge, increasing it all the time. Similarly, these differences are a means of mercy for the Ummat. In the Maslak of the Deoband, whilst one Math-hab is opted for, the others and their respective Aimmah are venerated and honoured. No concerted effort is made to propagate the chosen Math-hab and the others are not condemned. The other Aimmah are not dishonoured or rebuked in any way. No disrespect is shown and jest is not made of their respective Masaa`il. Such behaviour would result in destruction in both worlds. To regard the others as Baatil and aver that the Haqq is limited only to one's own Math-hab is a form of excessiveness. The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband detaches itself from such views and attitudes.
That person is destroying his Dunya and Aakhirah if he mocks and falsifies even the smallest part of any Math-hab and shows disrespect in any way to any of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahiddeen. One the other hand respect and honour for the Mujtahiddeen does not mean that one understands the rulings of any Mujtahid as being the original Shariah and embarks on a propagation campaign of that Math-hab.

In fact, the Ijtihaad of any Mujtahid comprises corollaries to the actual Shariah and Deen.
The Aimmah of Ijtihaad have merely extracted the various rulings from the original Shariah by means of their Ijtihaad and presented the same to the Ummat. Basically they have codified the Deen for the Ummat. Therefore, instead of rebuke and criticism they are worthy of high praise and thanks from the Ummat at large. It was due to their intelligence and insight of the knowledge of the Deen that they have extracted the various intricacies of the Deen for the benefit of the Ummat.

Nevertheless, with regard to the differences of opinion in Masaa`il, to follow the rulings of one particular Imaam and Mujtahid is one thing and to make the subject matter of an Imaam the point of contention and propagate it at the expense of slurring others is another. To be satisfied and contented with one's own Math-hab is one thing and to censure and rebuke others is another. The former stance and view is that of the Ulama of Deoband and the latter has no relation or connection to them.

**HADITH AND MUHADDITHEEN**

With regard to Hadith as well, the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is clear. Here also there is the element of moderation and conciseness as with the other faculties of the Deen. The basics of the matter is that since Hadith, which is the explanation and exegesis of the Qur`aan Majeed, it is also regarded as one of the origins of Deen, hence, they are not prepared to omit and overlook even the weakest of Hadith, as long as it is worthy of being considered as proof. To such an extent that even where there exists 'contradictory' narrations, instead of discounting any one of them , they make a concerted effort to find a suitable interpretation and reconciliation between these Ahaadith. This is done so that at least every Hadith can be practiced upon., and not left out, since the primary object of every narration is practice. The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is, in keeping with the principles of the Hanafi Math-hab, with regard to 'contradictory' Ahaadith that every effort is made to reconcile the narrations. This is not the case with the other Mathaahib in the case of 'contradictory' narration, for example, the principle of the Shaafi Math-hab in this regard is to consider the most authentic narration by taking into cognisance the chain of narrators. They consider the most authentic narration in that specific subject. They leave out the weak narrations. Or for example the principle of the Maaliki Math-hab is that they consider the practice of the residents of Madinah or Makkah with regard to 'contradictory' narrations. They opt for that narration which is closest to the practice of the Madinites or Makkans and leave out the other narration. The principle of the Hambali Math-hab is that they take into consideration the Fatwa of the majority of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum), when it comes to distinguishing between 'conflicting' narrations. On whichever narration the Fatwa of the majority of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum) leans towards, that is the one they choose and leave out the other.

In this regard Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullahi alaih) has opted for reconciling between such narrations. He would take into consideration all the Ahaadith regarding the particular issue and try to ascertain what the object of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was in this regard. He would see what commonness there is between all of them. He would, therefore, prior to considering the strength of the chain of narrators,

the practice of the residents of the Haramain or the Fataawa of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum), try to extract the import and object of the text (nusoos). After his research, he would then single out the narration which best exemplifies the aim of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) regarding the issue at hand and give a ruling accordingly, regardless of whether the narration is strong in its chain of narrators or weak. And then , instead of discounting and leaving out the other narrations, he would then attempt to make a reconciliation and draw a parallel of that narration with the desired object of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). In this fashion, he would make all narrations 'fit in' with the desired intention and aim of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) with regard to their respective subjects. In this way, the limits of knowledge increases. A clear reason for this method is that since every narration is a treasure-house and spring of knowledge, by making a reconciliation of the narrations, no narration is discounted altogether. Regardless of whether the narration is with a strong chain of narrators or a weak one. In this way, also, the knowledge contained in each narration is considered and not viewed in total isolation. The entire collection of narrations, when viewed with this perspective, opens up many doors of knowledge. When the practices and Fataawa of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum) are combined with this vast knowledge, then together they form a gigantic ocean of knowledge, where one branch compliments the other. This altogether gives firm ground to the actual intention and object of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) with regard to the various issues and Masaa`il.
However, in such cases where a reconciliation cannot be reached and formulated, the it becomes imperative to choose one of the narrations. The choice of narration in such a case depends upon the piety and deep insight of the narrators. Hence that narration is chosen whose narrator is the most *Faqeeh.*
The object of the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is not to opt for a narration based purely on the strength of the chain of narrators, or on the moist authentic narration regarding the issue at hand. The real basis is to take into consideration the object of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) regarding the issue at hand or at the very least to t\consider the most *Faqeeh* narrators. By considering the strincgest chain of narrators, the most that is achieved is that the narration is verified as being authentic, but it is not necessary that the most authentic Hadith is most applicable to *Fiqh* (understanding the Mas`alah) or that the narrator is the most *Faqeeh.*

If the most authentic narration under discussion is opted for, which has only the directive of the Mas`alah, and the narration which is not as authentic is left out, whilst it contains, besides the directive, the reason for the directive and the object thereof, then the directive will be left without a reason or object. In such a case, such a Mas`alah will not be able to progress further if further corollaries to that Mas`alah is encountered. The reason for a directive is imperative for its longevity and better understanding. It for this reason that Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullahi alaih) stresses more on the object of a directive, its reasoning and the insight of the narrator rather than just the strength of the narration. In this way the strength of the directive is ascertained as well.
It is apparent that if different and varying narrations are placed together and at one's disposal, then many rulings can be gleaned from them collectively as opposed to only one narration in isolation. Each of these resultant rulings can be sourced from this base and in this way, besides the authentic narrations, even those which are considered as weak, but are worthy of recognition, are not 'lost' and flung into oblivion.

This reconciliation of narrations and combining narrations is a special and unique principle of the Ahnaaf. They stress on this so that no narration is 'lost'. Notwithstanding all this, it is distressing that they are accused of making Qiyaas and abandoning and leaving out Ahaadith. Whereas, they are not merely compilers of their own principles of Fiqh, they are, in principle the protectors of all the schools of thought. This is possibly the reason why Imaam Shaafi (rahmatullahi alaih) said: *"All people of Fiqh are the children of Abu Hanifah".*

The Ulama of Deoband do not opt for austerity and sternness with regard to Ahaadith, rather they adopt a moderate and concise stance. They take into consideration the principles of all the Ulama with regard to narrations.

## ISLAAMIC THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGIANS *(KALAAM WA MUTAKALLIMEEN)*

There is moderation in this matter as well. There is almost complete consensus upon the established Aqaa`id from the *Nusoos-e-Sareehah (absolute texts).* Therefore, besides Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat, Ijma is also included here. However, in so far as corollary Aqaa`id and the explanation and dilation of the absolute Aqaa`id, there exists some differences of opinion. In order to have a unification and direction, it is important to adhere to the teachings of one of the deeply farsighted *Mutakallimeen*. Just as the Ulama of Deoband adhere to and follow one Imaam of Fiqh, they do likewise with an Imaam of Aqaa`id – in this regard they follow Imaam Abu Mansoor Maaturidi (rahmatullahi alaih). But just as in following and adhering to a specific Fiqh, the same applies to following a specific theology (Kalaam) where a free rein in research is not allowed. With the Masaa`il of Kalaam, *Qaasimia (Kalaam)* is the overriding one, which is derived from the teachings of Hujjatul Islaam Hadhrat Moulana Muhammed Qaasim Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih).
Hadhrat Moulana has established the basics and principles of Deen in the context of Kalaam and he expounded it in such an intellectual way, whereby its uniqueness shines forth when compared to any of the predecessors and latter Ulama. He presents this deep knowledge with rational and logical proofs in such a way that the opposition and detractors are constrained to accept and concede to it. Together with establishing the Masaa`il, Hadhrat also has this exclusivity that he has not taken to differences between the *Ash`aaria* and *Maaturidia*, rather he has reconciled between the two and extracted a path in between. He has so deftly achieved this balance that some Akaabir of Deoband even refer the Deoband Ulama as *Ash`aris*. Notwithstanding the fact that they follow *Maaturidi,* Hadhrat uses his wisdom to combine the two by intertwining them. The result being that many of the Masaa`il wherein there is a difference of opinion, this difference dissolves away and there remains no distinction between the two.

Just as when the detractors and opposition are faced on the battlefield and numerous different types of weapons are employed in combating them, so too has it become necessary for this art of Kalaam to be formulated and perfected in order to combat the detractors in a different field – intelligence. Many a times questions are raised regarding the Deen and the Ulama are required to use their intelligence to answer and counteract the sceptics. A natural question is now raised – with regard to the Math-

hab, what is the difference and scale between rational (*Aqli)* and superficial/written *(Naqli)*? Are these two equally considered or not?
In providing an answer to this, two groups exist, which opposes one another with excessiveness. The group whose minds are overwhelmed by philosophy have given dominance of *Aqli* over *Naqli*. They have almost granted Aql the status of being the original and Naql secondary. They will not accept any ruling as being valid, unless it conforms to the Aql. A clear deduction of this is that this group classify Wahi (Divine revelation) as being subservient to Aql. The *Mu`tazilah* are engrossed in this belief. They are besot with the concept of Aql and have openly ruled Wahi to be based on Aql. They have also based Allaah Ta`ala's Attributes of Knowledge, Awareness, Guidance and Wisdom on the Aql and regard them as being subservient to the Aql, *Nauthubillaah.* The philosophers of yore have taken a step forward and have reached the stage of worshipping and idolising the Aql. They have attributed the quality of creation to the Aql, thereby granting it affiliation to the exclusive Quality of Allaah Ta`ala. Although they have not openly declared it as a creator, but they have clearly implied it as such. The philosophers of present times have then a giant leap ahead of their predecessors and have claimed, based on their Aql (rationality) that there is no deity. In their estimation there is no such a thing as Deen and Math-hab. They have subjected the functioning of the universe to the understanding of their weak and puny Aql. It is possible that their original desire was rationalism.
In order to combat this type of belief and ideology, some Muslim factions went on a crusade of totally denying the concept of rationalism and Aql. They claimed that the Aql has absolutely no play or consideration in Math-hab. They have clearly proclaimed that the Aql has no access in any ruling of the Shariah. The Deen and Math-hab are a test and trial for the servants of Allaah Ta`ala, which will differentiate the obedient from the rebellious. Rationality has no play in this. The example is like a master who instructs his slave to lift a rock or touch a tree. The object of the master is to test the obedience of the servant and nothing else. So in such a case the rationality and intelligence of the servant will be of no consideration or use.

However, the Ulama of Deoband have adopted a view of moderation and balance in this respect. They consider the Aql where it can be applied and they do not deny it completely. On the other hand they do not regard it as being absolute, whereby it is regarded as being an original in Deen like Wahi. Hence, the Ulama of Deoband regard and consider the Aql to be a useful tool in the Deen, but they do not regard it as being absolute or a necessity. They regard the Aql as a tool to establish and verify Aqaa`id or Masaa`il. The Aqaa`id and Masaa`il themselves do not gain or benefit from the Aql.
They do not test the Naql with the Aql. In fact, Naql-e-Saheeh (authentic written proofs) are used to test the Aql. It is regarded as a scale whereby the Aql is weighed and measured. According to them the original and foundation of the Deen is the Divine revelation and amongst its servants of verification is the servant of Aql. Although this is an honourable servant, nevertheless, it does not become the master or deciding factor.

Hence, the Ulama of Deoband are neither philosophers nor Mu`tazilis, in fact, they are on the path of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, who regard the Aql as being subservient and affected. That is, in the position of the slave and never the master or ruler. According to them the Aql is a tool to reflect deeper and more effectively at the Deen, whereby hidden wisdoms and realities are uncovered. However wisdoms and

realities are not created by it. Hence, the Aql is an ‘opener’ of rulings and not the leader or creator thereof. If any wisdom is deduced by the Aql from any ruling, then the ruling is not based upon the Aql, in fact, the Aql is based upon and subservient to the ruling. Divine orders and rulings are the fountainhead and spring of intelligence and wisdom and not the other way around. The Aql is the dilator and clarifier of the rulings and not the originator thereof. It is the vehicle to reach the ruling and not the object of the ruling itself.
It is apparent that the Aql referred to here is that one which is absorbed in the recognition of Allaah Ta`ala and His remembrance. An Aql which is oblivious of Allaah Ta`ala and His remembrance has no place as the servant of Deen. The Qur`aan Majeed has described such an Aql as ***“Labb” (intelligent/wise)***. The Qur`aan Majeed has described the one who recognises the Greatness and Power of Allaah Ta`ala by reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and the earth as ***“Ulool Albaab” (intelligent ones).*** In this Aayat these two qualities are described – ***Thikr*** (remembrance) and ***Fikr*** (contemplation). Allaah Ta`ala says:

***“Those who remember Allaah whilst they are standing, sitting or on their sides and they ponder over the creation of the skies and earth.”***

From this it is apparent that the general Aql which is free from these two traits – Thikr and Fikr – are not worthy of being servants and tools of Deen. This entire discussion was regarding ***Labb*** and not merely general Aql, which in the first place is not even worthy of being a servant of the Deen.

## POLITICS AND KHULAFAA

The Shariah has granted a certain level of unrestrictedness and respite with regard to politics and collective matters. Politics is applicable in the administration of a dominion and since there are divergent situations in different countries, the Shariah has not placed any specific and hard and fast rules in this regard. It has left the plan of action in many situations to the one in control, to do as he deems appropriate. For example the Shariah has laid down the principles for choosing a leader or Khalifah, but it has not ordained any specific method which has to necessarily complied with, that it has to take place by nomination or general election, etc., etc. The method to be adopted is left to the discretion of those with insight and knowledge to do as suits the situation and occasion. It has also given the ruler of a country to adopt the suitable and appropriate ways and methods of punishment and compensation to be applied for various crimes and misdemeanours (this would exclude the Qur`aanic limits of *Hudood* and *Qisaas,* which have to applied at all times). The leadership will consider the various avenues open to him and reflect over the Fiqhi and historical aspects of the situation at hand and he will act in accordance to his aim of whether he wishes to establish the Deen or introduce the Deen in his jurisdiction. In this regard he will adopt the necessary avenue of *Shura (mutual consultation)*. In this regard the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is *Imaarat-e-Shuraaia (establishing a leadership based on Shura)*, the details and dilation of which have been explained and outlined by Hadhrat Shah Waliullaah (rahmatullahi alaih), in ‘*Hikmat-e-Waliulaahi’*. He has explained the various subjects related to this topic and opened up the underlying wisdoms. Hadhrat Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih) ha lifted his pen and unlocked the vault of the wisdoms of the Shariah and Hadhrat Shah Waliullaah (rahmatullahi alaih) has done likewise to the wisdoms of legislation. It is for this reason that the Ulama of Deoband have

acquired their knowledge of social and community matters from Hadhrat Shah Waliullaah (rahmatullahi alaih) and knowledge of theological matters from Hadhrat Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih). This demonstrates the credence granted by the Maslak to personalities and the respect and honour granted to the knowledgeable ones in every field and branch of the Deen. This is an important trait of this Maslak. The primary fundamental of this Maslak is the statutory laws and ordinances. Both important and primary fundamentals of the Maslak has been outlined in some detail, where the Hadith ***"Ma Ana Alaihi Wa Ashaabi" (That (way) upon which I and my companions are)*** has been explained with regard to the meanings and import of the words ***"Ma"*** and ***"Ana"*** are concerned.

From this compound principle another essential constituent of the Maslak is automatically deduced, and that is the principle of identifying and understanding the objective of the *Nusoos-e-Shar`i.* The question is answered that what is the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband with regard to understanding the Divine desire and specifying and identifying the desires of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)? Which principle is employed to fathom what the intention of Allaah Ta`ala or Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is in a certain Aayat or certain Hadith? Because in so far as understanding the aim and objective, numerous different and varying factors come into play. For example, one way is that of the opinion that the pages of the Qur`aan Majeed and Hadith be placed before one and one employs one's intellect and understanding to extract the aim and objective. Another way is through the Arabic language, in that one takes into consideration the various aspects of the grammar and eloquence of the language to ascertain the object of Allaah Ta`ala's Words. Another way is to take into consideration the ways and habits of the general Muslim masses together with the texts of the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnah and understand the aim and object in the light of the customs and practices of the people. Another way is understanding the import of the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat through the narrations and anecdotes of the pious personalities. Another way is where the need of the time and circumstance are taken into consideration, etc., etc.

The crux is that each of these methods and ways take the intellect in a particular direction, and this in turn leads each individual to understanding a certain point. Therefore, the actual thing is intellect and fervour, and it is this fervour which houses the understanding. Now, the natural question arises that what is the view of the Ulama of Deoband in this regard and what is the direction of their fervour in this effort?

This question can be answered in the light of the aforementioned principles, that the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband with regard to understanding is neither one of self-opinion, nor culture and customs, nor fabricated narrations and tales and neither the theories of the time. In fact, it is based upon education and nurturing, which are founded on two fundamentals – one is Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat and the other is the effulgence of the teacher and tutor. Together with this there are two conditions; the first is *Istinaad (referring to someone or something as a reference)*, and the second is a well-nurtured and refined intellect.

Just as the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) from Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), the Taabieen from the Tab`e Taabieen, the era thereafter from them, and in this fashion from personality to personality the knowledge of the Kitaabullaah and Sunnat was

transmitted down the ages and the fervour of understanding of the Qur`aan Majeed and Hadith was gained through their respective nurturing. Each group passed this on to the next, until it has reached us in this present age. The same chain of narrators whose connection reaches to Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has come to us and will be continued from here. It is clear that for the benefit of the intellect, this well-dyed and colourful transmitted objectives and aims could not have been achieved merely by the means of paper, or research, or customs, or the conditions of nations, or by reflection upon the language and its eloquence, or by fabricated narrations and anecdotes. This is achieved by the correct nurturing and companionship of the relevant personalities.
Together with this, the intensity of Imaan and the conditions of love (for Allaah Ta`ala) and fervour of *Muhabbat* is also something which is transmitted from bosom to bosom. It cannot be done through the medium of paper or any other means. The companionship and connection with the personalities is essential for the impact on the soul and heart, and this cannot be achieve merely by paper or other isolated means. It is for this reason that those who have isolated themselves from the pious personalities and resort to only paper and literature are grossly deficient in the intellect and nurturing. They fail in achieving the required aims and desires of Allaah Ta`ala and Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Such persons reflect and expound their own views and objects and not those of Allaah Ta`ala and His Rasool (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).
The same applies to those who divorce themselves from the Kitaab and Sunnah and are besot with personalities. They are equally at a loss. When they do not have the Kitaab and Sunnah in front of them, they will not be able to benefit from the conditions and personalities of the pious.

Just as the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is a combination of legislative laws and personalities, so too is their intellectual understanding a combination of these two vital constituents – Kitaab (text) and Ustaad (teacher). Together with this is added *istinaad* and nurturing and fervour of the intellect. They extract the actual Deeni interpretations from the Kitaab and they glean the meanings and import of these interpretations from the pious personalities. Through *istinaad* they establish a link directly to Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and through nurturing they save themselves from deviation and gain steadfastness in deriving objectives and aims.

If one draws a parallel between guidance and deviation through the history of ages, then it will be discerned that the deviated nations were led into deviation due to the fact that they completely omitted the two fundamentals in understanding Deen – Kitaab and Ustaad – or that they satisfied themselves with either one of the two and omitted the other. The result of this is that eventually both are discarded, because without a tutor, the import of the Kitaab cannot be properly understood. If the naffs is made the Imaam in trying to understand the Kitaab or it is done without a tutor or a nurtured intellect, then one will be left with the objectives and understanding of one's own naffs. The object of Allaah Ta`ala will never dawn on one. Without the Kitaab and its required interpretation, the Deen no longer remains pure. When the interpretation of Allaah Ta`ala is omitted in favour of only that of the tutor, then this leads to confusion and jumbled ideologies, which eventually give rise to Bid`ahs and customs, which alter the true understanding and intellect with mirages, hallucinations and delusions. In this way, also, the Deen no longer remains pure.

Those nations which sufficed upon the Kitaab only and divorced themselves from the personalities, were prone to rebelliousness and pride. As for those who discarded the Kitaab in favour of personalities, they became involved in personality-worship and shirk. The result in both the cases was that the pure Deen no longer remained alive. From amongst the previous nations, the Jews chose only the Kitaab and discarded personalities, which resulted in their pride and rebelliousness. The Christians on the other hand satisfied themselves with only personality-worship and discarded the Kitaab, which resulted in shirk and Bid`ahs. The fitnah of knowledge permeated in the heads of the Jews, which altered their intellect into illusions and visions and this resulted in *Ma`moolaat (religious practices)* being replaced by *Tawahhummaat (hallucinations and superstitions)*. The Christians were overtaken by the fitnah of practice, which resulted in their customary practices leading to their deviation and out of ignorance their path was altered. The first group divorced themselves from personalities and became proud and rebellious to such an extent that they regarded the personalities as their enemies, which led to their murdering and assassinating the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) and Auliyaa (rahmatullahi alaihim). The latter group digressed from the teachings of the Kitaab and they opted for personalities only. They degraded themselves and eventually made their prophets and pious personalities their deities and worshipped them. The first group were enveloped by the fitnah of knowledge and they ended in doubts and hallucinations whereas the second group were encased and enshrouded in the fitnah of practice and they ended in the quagmire of desires and fancies.

The Qur`aan Majeed termed the first group as ***Maghdoob (those with Allaah Ta`ala is angry)*** because of their pride and rebellion and the second group ***Daal (astray and deviated)*** because of their degradation and worship of the creation. The first group became deniers and rebellious, whilst the second group became Bid`atis and Mushrik. The reason for the downfall of these groups was their abandonment of one of the two basic fundamentals of Deen, which resulted in them losing out completely – they lost the Kitaab and the personalities. Regarding the first group, Allaah Ta`ala says:

***"Whenever a Rasool came to them with a message which did not suit their naffs, they belied one group and killed another."***

Regarding the second group, Allaah Ta`ala says:

***"They took their learned ones and priests as deities, besides Allaah. And (also) Maseeh Ibn Maryam. (Whilst) They have not been ordered to worship except one Deity."***

The Ummat-e-Muslimah has within its rank examples of both these groups. There is a sect which suffice only upon the Kitaab and Sunnah and they do not limit themselves to only being independent from the Salf-e-Saaliheen, they even resort to disrespecting and bad-mouthing the pious predecessors and they disparage the Salf. There is a group that suffice themselves upon the Salf-e-Saaliheen only and they do not have any bond or attachment to the Kitaab and Sunnat. Not only that but sometimes they even have the gall and audacity to aver that the Kitaab is silent and the Auliyaa are (like) speaking Kitaabs and that this is sufficient for them. The first group are like the Jews and they are embroiled in the fitnah of knowledge and display pride and rebelliousness. The second group are like the Christians and are entangled in the

fitnah of practice, which results in Bid`ah and innovations. Hadhrat Sufyaan Thauri (rahmatullahi alaih) mentioned upon viewing this scenario:

*"That person who despoils our Ulama is like the Jews and that one who becomes deviated in (excessive love for) the pious joins the ranks of the Christians."*

Hence such groups are responsible for deviation in Islaam, due to their abandoning the two essential fundamentals. Some have abandoned the respect and honour for the pious personalities due to their parading only under the banner of following the Kitaab and Sunnat, whilst others have abandoned the Kitaab and Sunnat under the guise of adhering solely to the pious predecessors. This is the reason why Allaah Ta`ala had restricted the guidance and nurturing of man, from the time of Hadhrat Aadam (alaihi salaam) right upto Qiyaamah, on two conditions – Kitaab and Ustaad. In every era the Divinely revealed Scriptures were sent with the personalities of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). The Divine Scriptures were revealed together with the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam).

***"Indeed We have sent Our Rusul with clear sings and We have revealed with them A Kitaab and a scale so that the people may be established upon justice."***

This is the reason why the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam), especially Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) had left behind them, as inheritance, a Kitaab of guidance for the recognition of the Divine Laws and knowledge, together with this they have also left the means whereby this treasure be achieved and learnt, and that is the Ulama and Khulafaa.

On the one hand Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) mentioned:

***"I have left amongst you two weighty things. You will never be deviated after me, if you adhere to these two things – Kitaabullaah and my Sunnat."*** [Ibn Majah]

On the other hand, Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) stated:

***"The just (pious) persons amongst the coming generations will attain this knowledge, whereby they will refute the adulteration (to the Deen) of the transgressors, and the changing of the evil-doers and the incorrect interpretation of the ignorant ones."*** [Mishkaat]

These two Ahaadith have been mentioned and apply until the Day of Qiyaamah. It is apparent that these two entities – Kitaab and Ikhlaaf – will be in existence until the Final Day. In every era the pious will leave the correct path which will be learnt and treaded by their successors. Hence there is no era which came with only the Kitaab, and that a tutor was not complementary to it. Similarly, no era came with only tutors and no Kitaab or legislative laws. If this was the case, then there would not have been a preservation of the Deen in its pristine purity. This is precisely the reason why the Ulama of Deoband have chosen the path which includes these two essential fundamentals of the Deen – the knowledge and the tutor -- in order to establish the complete Deen and save it from deviation, innovations and Bid`ahs. From this principle another important aspect of the Deen becomes apparent, which branches out from here. And here also, the element of moderation and conciseness is adopted. This

is the aspect of extracting proofs from the Nusoos-e-Shar`i. This is an aspect which in this era has become entangled and confused, wherein excessiveness and exaggeration has entered to a large extent. Their view is that whilst both the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat are both centres for deriving proof, neither one of the two should be sufficed upon (in isolation). Just as the words and interpretation of the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat are understood so too must their internal meaning, objectives and import be understood. The fervour for this is created by the seniors in knowledge, who extract proofs from both the internal and external factors of Nusoos. They do not suffice only upon the external proofs, like some, nor do they suffice upon only the internal proofs, like others. They do not concentrate only on one aspect and abandon the other.

The Ulama of Deoband combine the external and internal proofs of the Nusoos and fulfil the due rights of both. They do not incline their efforts in only one direction, and in this way the external knowledge of the Nusoos becomes apparent and the internal recognition also remains intact. This concise internal and external Maslak results in such individuals that are Aalim Billaah (i.e. they recognise Allaah Ta`ala) and they are also Aalim Bi Amrillaah (aware of the commandments of Allaah Ta`ala). in this way their knowledge and training encompasses all aspects of the Deen. In this Maslak, just as is the case of narrations, the Nusoos of the Qur`aan Majeed, Hadith and Fiqh, with their proper proofs and meanings are necessarily imparted to the masses. Without which the Deen cannot remain firm and pristine. When the Deen is preserved with vigorousness and diligently, then it is saved from all sorts of Fitnahs and adulterations.

The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is to necessarily preserve every aspect and part of the Deen, be it Fiqhi, Hadithi or Qur`aani. In similar vein, with regard to the intricacies of Deen, leeway and grace, as much as is possible, is granted to the masses. Severity and austerity in this regard is kept away from the public.
Hence, the Ulama of Deoband, with regard to their concise internal and external Maslak, neither allow freedom nor grant autonomy in external rulings and matters, nor do they completely divest themselves from the desires and needs of the time in their policy of internal and general respite (for the masses). This is the moderate and concise policy of the Ulama of Deoband, which has reached them in this final era, from the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat through the medium of Imaam Shah Waliullaah Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaih), Hadhrat Hujjatul Islaam, Moulana Muhammed Qaasim Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih), who is the founder of Daarul Uloom Deoband and Qutub-e-Waqt Hadhrat Moulana Rashid Ahmad Saheb Gangohi (rahmatullahi alaih).

In Shar`i terms, the summary of this concise and moderate Maslak is as follows: The Deen of the Ulama of Deoband is Islaam, it is the sect of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, their Math-hab is Hanafi, spiritually they are Sufis, their belief (Kalaam) is Maaturidi, their path of Sulook is Chisti, in fact a combination of all the paths, their Fikr (intellectual inclination) is Waliullahi, their Usool is Qaasmi, their corollary (Furoo`) is Rashidi, and their connection is Deobandi.

**THE ORIGIN AND STARTING POINT OF THE ULAMA OF DEOBAND**

The starting point of the Ulama of Deoband is Daarul Uloom Deoband. The teachings and mode of practice of this Maslak spread throughout India and it became known by the title of Ulama of Deoband. It is necessary and appropriate that we expound on the

objectives of the Daarul Uloom as envisaged by the venerable founder and his respected companions, so that not only the theoretical side but also the practical side of the institution be presented to all and sundry.

In so far as the Maslak is concerned, if we place the history of the Daarul Uloom in front of us, then it will be noted that the predecessors and the founders were not merely claimants of the Maslak, they were in fact, practical examples thereof. Specifically the venerated founder (rahmatullahi alaih), who was a physical embodiment of the theoretical and practical aspects of the Maslak. It was as though if this concise Maslak was to be given a physical form, then it would have been Hadhrat Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih) himself, whose actions and speech were an embodiment of the Maslak. This is the reason why the various aspects of this Maslak was not in need of lengthy dialogue and advertising campaigns. The mere example exemplified by the elders spoke volumes and the entire objective of the Maslak was presented before the eyes of the people. This physical demonstration of the ideologies of the Maslak made an impression on the onlookers and it was thus implanted on the minds, just like how the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) were a physical form and example of the life of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). After the demise of these personalities, whatever trust their bosoms held was transmitted through the ages from bosom to bosom. Otherwise, owing to the fact that this is *Aalam-e-Asbaab (place of cause and effect)*, had this system of transmission from Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the Sahaabah (radhiallahu anhum) not been implemented, then there is a fear that this Deen would have been destroyed. This same system applied to the origins of the Maslak of Deoband, in that the founders were examples of this Maslak and their effect passed on to others, thereby procuring its existence. The transmission from the time of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) remained constant upto the era of the founding of Daarul Uloom. The founders of Daarul Uloom had to ensure that just as they had received the Deen in the unadulterated form leading up to Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), they were dutibound in seeing that this same trust which was handed down to them is passed on, thereby granting perpetuality to the chain of transmission. In order to achieve this, they implemented the following:

Firstly: The venerable founder (rahmatullahi alaih) founded the Daarul Uloom on the basis of learning and teaching and he initiated Ta`leem. He personally began the classes in the *Chatta Musjid*, which was the starting point of Daarul Uloom Deoband. The element of this Maslak was dominant in his classes. Amongst his students, two of them excelled and became Imaams in the knowledge of Deeni, Hadith, Qur`aan Majeed, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Hikmat, Kalaam, etc. They followed on and successively, one after the other became the principals of Daarul Uloom Deoband – that is Aarif Billaah Hadhrat Muhammed Ya`qub Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih) and Mujaahid Fi Sabeelillaah Hadhrat Sheikhul Hind, Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan Saheb Deobandi (rahmatullahi alaih). Hadhrat Moulana (rahmatullahi alaih) did not restrict his classes and teachings to Daarul Uloom Deoband only, he established Madrasahs in various places and sent Ustaads to commence Ta`leem. This act and gesture of Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) demonstrated one of the most important and primary objectives of the movement of Daarul Uloom Deoband and that was to spread the teachings of the Kitaab, Sunnat and the other branches of Deen together with establishing Madrasahs and Makaatib in order to further achieve this goal.

Secondly: From the very same *Chatta Musjid*, which was the starting point of Daarul Uloom Deoband and the place of residence of the venerable founder (rahmatullahi alaih), he also initiated *halqahs* of guidance and spiritual instruction. This branch and section of the Deen was then introduced in Daarul Uloom. The spiritual rectification and nurturing of the students was thereby effected through this spiritual attention afforded to them by Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih). This action of Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) brought to life another fundamental objective and goal of Daarul Uloom, and that is the aspect of spiritual reformation and purification of the naffs.

Thirdly: Within the precincts of Daarul Uloom Deoband, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) established a 'legal court' and he appointed Hadhrat Moulana Ya`qub (rahmatullahi alaih) as the *Qaadhi (judge)*. Many complications and problems were resolved and sorted out in the light of the Shariah. Islaamic justice became commonly known and accepted by the Muslims. This is the basic and fundamental branch in governmental administration. This also made clear yet another objective of Daarul Uloom Deoband which was to protect and establish the personal and social interests of the Muslims.

Fourthly: Within the precincts of Daarul Uloom, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) started the students with training in the art of fencing, club-fencing, and the use of the staff – *Laati, big stick* -- (for defence purposes), etc. This makes apparent that one of the objectives of Daarul Uloom was to establish and keep alive the spirit of self-defence and Jihad, which are essential branches in political dominion. Although there were objections and criticisms from detractors and the opposition who scorned that Daarul Uloom no longer was a centre for learning, it was a Madrasah for battle training. However, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) paid no attention to them.

Fifthly: Due to the attacks and assault on the Deen by the Christian missionaries, and other deviated sects, this gave rise to many doubts creeping in amongst the people due to the objections and questions raised against Islaam by these detractors and shaitaani agents. Since all these doubts needed to be cleared and the objections answered, this set in motion the system of debates and lectures. Admonishing lectures and sermons were undertaken in Deoband and outlying areas. Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) undertook journeys to the outlying areas and he also made the students do likewise. This reformatory process spread and increased and its centre and base was Daarul Uloom Deoband.

For the reformation of the locals, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) paid great attention to the rectification of social dealings and behaviour, because the brotherhood of Deoband was generally involved in customs of ignorance. Marriage to widows was initiated, a practice which previously was regarded as extremely degrading and disgraceful to such an extent that even the mention of it would result in the drawing of swords. The womenfolk of the affluent were encouraged to discard the dress of Hindus, which was common amongst them. The practice of placing *ta`ziyahs* in the Musaajid was removed, which used to take place during Muharram in almost every Musjid. Rectification was effected with regard to the various customs regarding marriage, times of grief, etc. The customs of *Bhaati, Teejah, daswah*, etc. were terminated. The result was that the (Muslim) residents were placed on the path of becoming an Islaamic society. This was achieved not by admonishing lectures and sermons, but rather by means of practical demonstration. A written pledge was taken from the responsible people of the community and they signed and endorsed it, after

they were made to understand. Good social dealings were thus initiated and spread. This demonstrated that one of the objectives of the Daarul Uloom was to rectify and reform the society.

Sixthly: Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) made and attempt to promote and make common the Sunnat practice and fervour for the Sunnat amongst the Shuyookh of Deoband. Although the Shuyookh of Deoband were not Shiahs, their names and actions reeked of the effects of Shiasm. These effects were generally noted amongst the illiterate ones. Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) removed this. In this regard, there is a famous saying of Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) which we have heard from the predecessors: *"First I became a part of the people of Deoband and then I made them a part of me."* Hadhrat Moulana Zulfiqaar Ali Saheb (rahmatullahi alaih) once stated: *"We could not oppose him (Hadhrat Naanotwi - rahmatullahi alaih), because our children were all in his control and influence."* This shows that as far as rectification was concerned, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) began with the prominent people rather than the common-folk. Another way of putting it is that he made the reformation of the general masses by means of practical example and that of the prominent-folk with theory. Therefore the objective and program of Daarul Uloom Deoband was to combine the reformation Fikr (concern) and Amal (practice).

Seventhly: Hadhrat Naanotwi (rahmatullahi alaih) had, towards the end of his life expressed the regret that he was not au fait with the English language so that he could go to Europe and show the claimants to wisdom that wisdom I not what they envisage and claim, true wisdom lies in the teachings of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). And also that the rectification and success of the universe lies not in this superficial 'wisdom', rather it is hidden within the true wisdom. This makes clear that it was also amongst the objectives of the Ulama of Deoband to spread Islaam and its beautiful teachings to foreign people and nations, but due to the constrained circumstances and the restrictions of the era, this could not be translated into, practically. The successors of Daarul Uloom had gradually made a step in this direction and steadily, Daarul Uloom incorporated English, Sanskrit, etc. Today English is accepted and a part and branch of Daarul Uloom, hence the effects of Daarul Uloom started being felt all over. The road for international effort has thus been opened and the desire of the venerated founder (rahmatullahi alaih) has been translated into practice.

Eighthly: Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) introduced the concept of scholarly and defensive writings. He presented Hikmat and Islaamic theology to the world in a new and different format. In this way he also introduced his students to this trend of writing and authoring. This also demonstrates that one of the objectives of Daarul Uloom Deoband was, according to the need and necessity of the hour, to fulfil the vacuum and void of writing and authoring.

Ninthly: Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih), the other Ustaads of Daarul Uloom and their sympathisers, not only established and maintained theoretical relations and ties with the Khalifah of the Muslims, the Sultan of the Turkey, they even literally and practically supported and assisted him in various ways. For example, they wrote proses of praise for the Sultan, they established a fund to assist the Turks in their battle expeditions. They collected thousands of Rupees and sent it in their assistance. Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) had himself donated virtually all his own and his wife's belongings in this avenue. He established spiritual ties with the Khalifah and he even

travelled there and encouraged his students to do likewise. This demonstrates that another of Daarul Uloom's objectives was to render assistance to (other) nations and people in order to keep the Islaamic brotherhood alive and also for the preservation of an Islaamic state.

Tenthly: In order to save all this theoretical and practical works and teachings from the influence of strangers and in order to maintain the independence and freedom that they enjoyed in so far as their expression of knowledge was concerned, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) avoided any assistance from the state and sufficed upon the generous and sincere assistance, albeit limited, of the Muslim public. Even in today's turbulent times, Daarul Uloom can be considered the bastion of the Muslims.

The objectives and aims of the venerated founder (rahmatullahi alaih) of Daarul Uloom Deoband, although it was not propagated as a fixed and set program, and it had no active helper, however, Hadhrat (rahmatullahi alaih) through Allaah Ta`ala's Fadhl, with his practical demonstrations and manner of ways, demonstrated all theses objectives, and even though all this could not have been expressed on paper at that time, it was most certainly expressed and effected upon the hearts of the people. Together with the *Ilmi* Maslak of Daarul Uloom Deoband, the practical side of this Maslak was also established, so was the establishment of the Daarul Uloom.

The crux of the matter is this that Daarul Uloom Deoband was not merely a Madrasah and it should not be viewed as being solely a Madrasah, because the Daarul Uloom was not only about teaching and Ta`leem, it was a centre of Islaamic concern and revival. It was a place of Islaamic practice as well. It was a place which incorporated a detailed program for the assistance, preservation and existence of the Muslim nation. It included all the various branches which have been outlined above. My opinion is that not only for the past but also for the future, the constructive answers to many of the Deeni and worldly difficulties, exist in these objectives. ***If they but only know!***

Hence, the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband is not merely restricted to theoretical expression and teachings, it includes the practical side as well, which was demonstrated more than a century ago. If one ponders and reflects well, then it will be discerned that this will remain such for the next century as well (Insha-Allaah Ta`ala). The hue of the Institution incorporates Ta`leem, Tableegh, social etiquettes, justice legislation, exercise and recreational training, spiritual rectification, striving and Islaamic brotherhood.

The Maslak of Daarul Uloom Deoband, as concise, just and encompassing as it is, the practice and program of the founder (rahmatullahi alaih) is just as concise and complete, which supported and recouped the failing Muslim Ummat of the time. It is important to remember that the venerable founder (rahmatullahi alaih) had kept the foremost and primary objective as Ta`leem, because every facet of Deen is based and dependant upon knowledge, and not ignorance. Tableegh, Tasneef (authoring), leadership, politics, Tasawwuf, exercise, independence, etc. all these are derivatives of knowledge. If there is no knowledge then with ignorance these things cannot be established or maintained. If it were existing then it would denigrate into Fitnah. Politics which is divorced from (Islaamic) knowledge results in a forlorn and bankrupt state. Sermons and lectures which are devoid of knowledge will result in moneymaking seminars and speeches. If knowledge is not on the back of Tableegh,

then it will result in a ritual movement which will bring about the downfall of knowledge. If there is no knowledge in Tasawwuf, then it will result in priesthood and hypocritical hypocrisy. In short, any facet of Deen, which is devoid of knowledge will result in Fitnah and chaos. This much must also be acknowledged that knowledge without all these branches and facets of Deen will be a weak and insignificant tool. The strength, expansion, beauty, effect and progress of knowledge is dependant on the various branches and facets of Deen. Had it not been for all these branches of the Deen, then the existence and longevity of knowledge would be difficult. In sort, these facets of Deen cannot exist without knowledge and knowledge will not prolong or last without them. Hence each one is dependant upon the other. However the original and foundation is knowledge and these facets are the corollaries. Therefore in the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband, the importance and significance granted to knowledge is dominant over that of any other branch of Deen. This is the reason why the Institution was entitled a Madrasah and Daarul Uloom.
It was not called *Daarut Tableegh, Daarut Tasneef, Daarus Siyaasat, Daarut Tahqeeq, Khaanqah Tasawwuf,* etc., etc. Another virtue and hue of this Institution is that all branches were given and incorporated with the colour of Ta`leem and not that of a political, Tasawwuf, etc. colour. The founder (rahmatullahi alaih) was the first practical example and embodiment of the Maslak of Deoband and the successors continued this example of his and maintained the honour and dignity of the Institution. Under the guide and shade of this Institution thousands of Huffaaz, Ulama, Orators, Theologians, debaters, Muftis, Qaadhis, Sufis, researchers, etc. graduated and spread out over the globe.

1. They established thousands of Madrasahs in the country and abroad, wherefrom *Qaalalaah and Qaalar Rasulullah* were echoed. If one takes a stock then it would not be an exaggeration to aver that Daarul Uloom and its associated institutions have over the last century produced at least 20 to 25 thousand Ulama in India and surrounding areas.
2. There were countless powerful and influential graduates who made their voices heard and their effects felt throughout India and abroad. Innumerable Kitaabs and works, mostly in the Urdu language, were authored by these able personalities, whereby the propagation of the Deen to the masses was effectively effected. To such an extent that India became an exemplary symbol for Islaamic knowledge.
3. Many of the graduates excelled in the field of spiritually uplifting the masses and they started this path of Sulook, whereby thousands Mashaaikh were produced. Many people were led onto the path of salvation through this system and saved from deviation. They were shown the path leading to Allaah Ta`ala and were introduced to Thikr, good character and social behaviour. Not only this but many of these personalities set a standard and precedent in the branch of Tasawwuf. They purified the masses from numerous ill-qualities and customs. Thee once again alivened the Sunnat amongst the people.

Nevertheless, Daarul Uloom Deoband achieved its perfection in the initial stages from its base in *Chatta Musjid* and in the Halqah of Gangoh. After the demise of these two great personalities, the graduates of Deoband kept this standard and spark alive and their success was attributed to Deoband. There was the likes of Hadhrat Sheikhul Hind, Hadhrat Mufti-e-A`zam, etc. Also the places like Taanabowen, Raipoor,

Sahaaranpoor, Meerath, etc. became centres where this system of Deoband was kept alive.

The group of able graduates of Daarul Uloom, maintained the standard set by the venerable founder (rahmatullahi alaih).
At first the art of self-defence was initiated at Daarul Deoband, for which a special Ustaad was employed to teach and train the students. As far as the system of national movements is concerned, the movement of Hadhrat Sheikhul Hind (rahmatullahi alaih) has still not left the minds of the people, which involved the cooperation of many people from India and abroad. Then the movement for Khilaafat raised its head and the first place where the Fatwa for Khilaafat, as far as the Shariah was concerned, was issued, emanated from Daarul Uloom Deoband.
In this way, the graduates of Daarul Uloom initiated the system of organisations and associations. One specific organisation was formed entitled, *"Old boy's organisation"*. In this way their services were established in the communities and a centre and base was formed. The responsible people of the Daarul Uloom spread their message far and wide.

However, the branches of Ta`leem, Tableegh, Tasneef, Sulook, politics, etc, which the venerable founder (rahmatullahi alaih) had founded and established was effectively passed on and maintained by the group who studied there. As time progressed the form and hue of the various aspects many have been altered to adopt to the circumstance, but the foundations which were laid any years ago, were as strong and firm as ever. The same concise and moderate Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband which was demonstrated in the practical form remained intact. It is not the Maslak of Deoband to sit with a few Masaa`il or to concentrate on only a few branches and aspects of the Deen, in fact, it's teachings encompass everything. It is not the system of Deoband to limit the Deen to a few aspects and be under the impression that this is the complete Deen. Every aspect and branch of the Deen is firmly adhered to and Masaa`il and Fataawa are issued keeping in mind the principles of Fiqh. The Ijtihaad and ability of the Ahle Ilm are considered in the matters where there exists difference of opinion and they are kept free from formulating of self-opinion. Together with this, they are never oblivious of making Thikr, on the condition that it does not reach the stage of priesthood and austerity. Also, they are not unmindful of unity and brotherhood, on the condition that do not become embroiled and affected by customary rituals and habits. These are the elementary constituents of this Maslak. They stay far from any excessiveness by adhering fast to one and abandoning another. For example, to be immersed totally in Fiqh and to pay no attention to Hadith or to be only concerned with social issues and abandon Tasawwuf, or to be only involved in theoretical laws and not in Hikmat and philosophy, or to be involved in all of these theoretically and to be unwary of organising the nation and brotherhood. All these negative aspects are not part of the Maslak of Deoband.

Just as in the fields of knowledge, it is also not the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband to honour and respect only the personalities that are attached to a certain branch of the Deen and to disrespect or ignore the others. In fact, at all times, they hold in high esteem the Muhadditheen, Mutakallimeen, Fuqahaa, Sufia, Hukama, U`rafa, Khulafaa and Umaraa. This Maslak is at all times a total combination of all the aspects and branches of the Deen. Donned in the attire of *Naql* and *Aql*, they found the *Hikmat-e-Waliullaahi* in so far as Fikr is concerned. In understanding the Usool-e-Deen, they

have found *Himat-e-Qaasimia*. Regarding the corollaries of the Deen are concerned and fathoming the intricacies of matters, they found the practice and teachings of Hadhrat Gangohi (rahmatullahi alaih). The fervour and desire for Divine proximity and good character, they found in Hadhrat Haaji Imdaadullaah (rahmatullahi alaih). The desire to follow the Sunnat together with Tasawwuf, they found in Hadhrat Mujaddid Alfe Thaani (rahmatullahi alaih). The understanding of the Deen together with the Hadith they found in Hadhrat Shah Abdul Ghani (rahmatullahi alaih). The knowledge and practice of Deen and politics they found in the Mujaahideen of the family of Waliullaahi. In this way, they found the concise, just and enveloping Maslak of all these constituents at one time. Similarly, they acquired the various internal and external branches of the Deen through their connection with the Ahlullaah.

Upon reflecting at this conciseness and just Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband, Doctor Iqbal once made a statement which excellently describes this Maslak, in a single sentence. He was once asked if the Deobandi were a separate sect. To this he replied:

*"The title of every intelligent, unbiased and fair-minded pious person is Deobandi."*

Nevertheless, this comprehensively principled and personality (orientated) mixture is known as the Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband. This is *Deobandiat* and *Qaasimiat.* The learning and teaching of syllabi textbooks is not called *Deobandiat.*

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